

SUMMARIUM

MINORITIES AND EDUCATION

Recently there has been an increase in the public interest in the minorities and ethnics in Hungary. Many researchers, and two scientific periodicals, have specialized on these questions; and an extensive study on the potentialities of the European ethnics peaceful coexistence has been published.

Our periodical aims to take a closer look at the education of minorities in order to give, according to the profile of the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research, a overview with the help of our authors theoretical and empirical studies. In this issue we cannot present the conceptual framework in which the minorities are usually interpreted if we include in this term the ethnic and religious minorities as well as groups definable also as minorities, for this or that reason (e.g. children, women people of unusual sexual behavior or groups of people who are out of the ordinary for organic or mental reasons). But even if we pick out only the question of national and ethnic minorities it would be too big a task.

The next step in the restriction is if we study the questions of education in the relation of national and ethnic minorities. To do this we must be aware of the fact that there is hardly any scientific approach which ignores the questions of transmission of cultures and the questions on the field of education. The direct research and studies on education also represent many attitudes, we could list disciplines from anthropology to political science, from historical science to sociology, from psychology to pedagogy and to different fields of sciences studying the transmission of culture and the mechanism of institutional education among ethnic groups living together in certain ethnic areas. It would be beyond our knowledge and competence to systematize these scientific views and results.

The studies set out from the idea that each individual is born to a specific ethnic group and during the socialization process he acquires the cultural patterns, social values and norms of this certain ethnic group transmitted by the family and the close surroundings. There is not "worse" or "better", "high-class" or "low-class" culture: each individual and group has the right to survive and foster its own culture.

Nation, nationality, ethnic

The scientific bibliography of multiethnic, multiracial countries - Australia, the USA, Canada - has been dealing with these questions for several decades, analyzing and working out new strategies of coexistence. In Europe the question was approached traditionally from an other point of view. It was the coexistence of nations and nationalities that stood in the center of thinking not the cultures. Having simplified it we could call this research into history and anthropology concerning the country borders typically "European". (Lately it was the collapse of the Soviet-Union and the communist-socialist empire that dramatically showed how many questions have been raised by the variety of nationalities which have to be solved.

On the other hand we could call the empirical research aimed at the differences in socialization traditionally "American". While in big countries organized from many ethnic groups the variety in ethnics is a natural part of the society, Western Europe first confronted with the problems of the coexistence of different ethnic groups only when faced the problem of immigrants (foreign workers, political refugees). But it is not the only thing to be considered. Populist explanations in Western Europe associate the conflicts among the nations and nationalities of the "Eastern Block" countries with the antiquated and dangerous nationalisms while their own countries are thinking about ethnic Renaissance and they regard it as the characteristic feature of post modern societies.

Obviously the conflicts between nations and nationalities cannot be regarded simply as ethnic conflicts. In the opinion of some people the nation is something which is a vast, numerous ethnic

group modernized in a rational way and is different from any other ethnic community. The ground of this idea is that in the ideal case each individual of the nation is directly connected with the state, independently of whether this state is embodied in the idea of equality, liberty, and fraternity or in a charismatic leader.

The members of the nation speak the same language and their culture is also identical. However this kind of state does not exist. It happens more often that the nation is stratified according to classes, nationalities and ethnic groups. It is typical that the dominating ethnic group places its own ethnicity over all the others and includes them into the nation's culture as particular ethnic groups having their own particular culture.

Conflicts following the collapse of empires show clearly how complex a nation is. The aim of the conflicts can be the revival of the old nation-states, the foundation of new states or the attainment by communities of new and better position based on the language, religion, or culture. That is why these conflicts cannot be uniformly regarded as ethnic conflicts as they can be considerably different in their roots and aims.

The ethnic group is much rather a community established by individuals who had decided to include themselves into that certain group on the ground of consciousness of common descent, common culture based on the social organizations helping the interactions among people inside and outside the group. While in the idea of nation it is the state that plays crucial role it is the individual in the ethnicity. But still we cannot treat these ideas as representing totally different categories, because they strongly correlate with each other. When we talk about ethnicity, emphasizing that it is based on the decision of the individuals, we cannot deny that there exists ethnicity which is forced on a community by the dominating group which sticks on them this name as a stigma. It is the dominating groups ambition to protect its own positions concerning the political power, economy, markets that stands in the background. The ethnic minorities (e.g. immigrants) are often interpreted as groups falling behind the others and possessing regressive culture - it is the theory of cultural deficit. The breeding ground of it is that the minorities can take only a worse position in any markets. The ethnic minority, however, tries to organize its battles in defense of its social positions and culture.

There is a possibility of the ethnic tensions also deepening in the post modern social systems and, having this in sight, the search for compromises, for the forming of rules of coexistence corresponding to the democratic ideas does not mean only the realizing of the high moral ideals. The practical use of it is that it helps to avoid, prevent, and solve the ethnic conflicts.

Models of cultural integration

The idea of Europe's preceding toward unification and the practical accomplishments of the rearrangements raise questions including the problems of the individuals, ethnic groups, and nations at the same time. It seems obvious that the common market of Europe and the control over the nations is not sufficient to integration. The cultural integration is equally important.

Those who are thinking about the possibilities of the European cultural integration take into account the models listed below:

- The model of the "melting pot" presumes a common culture with the elements of particular cultures which cannot be distinguished. This model necessitates strong physical mobility and a very high level of bicultural socialization. Not only the perceptible failure of the "melting pot" but the possibility of the practical realization also speaks against this model.

- The model of the "hegemon culture" means the assimilating of all cultures into the dominant one. In this model the cultural identity means the full acceptance of the dominant culture and the complete giving up of the original ethnicity. European history proved many times that this model can be dangerous in the long term.

- In the model of multiculturalism the cultural identity is based on the variety of cultures. It is the most democratic answer to our questions today knowing that for the time being it is only an ideal and the realization of it can be a complicated process of many stages. (But the coexistence of Catholics and Protestants in Europe shows that it is not impossible.)

The multicultural society recognizes the importance of equal rights and shows respect to the minority cultures. It means that the individuals equal rights and liberty must be acknowledged in the economy and politics - everyone must have the right to follow his religion, to use his own language, to behave according to his cultural and family customs and to form his own organizations in defense of these. Probably the practical forming of the multiculturalism is going to be the most important topic of the political sociology of the next decade. For our region - in the old and new nation-states as well - it is the only practical plan.

The essential conditions of a multicultural society is the intercultural communication, the communication with the variety of cultures existing in a certain country and in the whole of Europe. On the level of the individual it means abilities such as being open to other cultures (learning better solutions of problems, solidarity), the ability of separating the individuals from their culture emotionally and in thinking (we must not accept or turn down somebody just because he is Romanian, German or Gypsy), the ability of treating the cultural conflicts. And not only the individuals but also the "national cultures" need these abilities. They must establish the appropriate procedures and institutions which transmit the ideals of behavior and culture, and take part in the solution of the ethnic conflicts. We should set out, from the fact that each different culture has equal value, that the task of the culture politics is to expand the institutional and structural conditions of the intercultural communication.

- The educational politics requires a so-called reflexive pedagogy which must influence the whole school system thoroughly. School exchange programs can strengthen the intercultural socialization.
- The knowledge of languages has a very big importance in the intercultural communication.
- As the socialization is a process for life the adult education must take on duties which help intercultural communication (language teaching, exchange programs).

In this issue we try to put the question of the education of nationalities into scientific relations. We are fully aware that we are referring to several fields of science such as the historical, regional, ethnical, political, sociological, pedagogical and economic sciences, the history of theory, the methodology of research and who knows what other sciences.

It is not an excuse but a positive fact that our studies do not represent specific branches of science but practically all of them reflect the views and opinions of social scientists. Consequently we offer more and somewhat different than could be expected from a periodical. According to our intentions we did not want to reflect the whole range of questions but to give an outline of a possible wide-ranging scientific workshop.

The studies published in this issue represent two kinds of approach. One of them gives an account on the problems and experiences concerning the institutional education of the nationalities in Hungary and to a smaller extent in foreign countries (with a stress on the neighboring countries).

We could not give a full view on the conditions of schooling of the particular nationalities. The method, the level and the starting point of the analyses are also different.

As we did not intend to publish a volume of studies , but because it is a thematic issue we must take on the diversity that we regard as necessary. We hope that the sketches, problems, questions, directions of development will make the position of the education of the nationalities perceptible and true to life.

The other group of writings illustrates the situation and the treatment of the cultural varieties in the public education. The theoretical basis for this field is given by the studies interpreting the multiculturalism. The problems of the settlers from Romania and that of the Gypsies can be counted among this group of empirical writings. Those who came from Transsylvania and settle down here in Hungary are situated in the conceptual sphere of "aborigines" and "immigrants". With the problems in the schooling of Gypsies we indicate that the acknowledgments of the great cultural variety cannot be restricted to language teaching since the culture cannot be regarded as equivalents, either.